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3/28/79 R

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

DATE:

March 28, 1979

REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

POL:FAHarris

memorandum

AZ051

File

SUBJECT:

Foreign Minister's Proposal on "the Disappeared"

TO:

FILE

(2)

On November 3, 1978, FOWG Chief, Juan Carlos Arlia, said that in May, 1978, Foreign Minister Montes made two proposals to the Junta regarding resolving the disappearance question:

(1) Foreign Minister Montes proposed that the time period for presumption of death in disappearance cases be shortened to two years from the present three. Arlia commented that this would probably affect over 50% of the disappearance cases.

(2) Adm. Montes also suggested that the GOA publish lists of all those persons being held and then affirm that the government was not holding any other prisoners. This would encourage families to accept the fact that if their children were still "disappeared," they probably died in "confrontations with the security forces."

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part ☒ In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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Page: 1

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PAGE 01
ACTION HA-05

BUENOS 02490 292017Z

3/29/79

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
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[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 2490

E.O. 12065: XDS - 1 (3-29-09) RAUL H. CASTRO, OR-M
TAGS: AR SHUM
SUBJ: [REDACTED] AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES HUMAN RIGHTS WITH GENERAL VIOLA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 2399 STATE: 075474 AND 75082

1. [REDACTED] ALL TEXT.

2. YESTERDAY (MARCH 28) I HAD MY ROUTINE VISIT WITH GENERAL VIOLA, JUNTA PRESIDENT AND ARMY COMMANDER. WE MET IN HIS OFFICE AT ABOUT 1830 HRS AND THAT TIME OF THE DAY ADMITTEDLY BOTH OF US WERE "BUSHED", AND IT BECAME APPARENT TO ME VIOLA WAS NOT IN A TALKATIVE MOOD.

3. I REVIEWED THE CONTENTS OF STATE 075474 IN THE SAME MANNER I HAD DONE IT WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA ON MARCH 26. (SEE B.A.2399). THIS HAD TO DO WITH OUR ABSTENTION IN THE RAILROAD LOAN VOTING BEFORE THE WORLD BANK ON MARCH 27. WHEN I WENT OVER THE BILL OF PARTICULARS ON GOA'S VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, VIOLA BECAME IMPATIENT AND EXPRESSED HIS UNHAPPINESS OVER USG ATTITUDE. THE SAVING FACTOR WAS US ABSTAINED RATHER THAN A "NO" VOTE, FOR WHICH HE EXPRESSED HIS GRATITUDE. AT THIS POINT, HE ORDERED COFFEE FOR BOTH OF US, ALLOWING SUFFICIENT TIME FOR A "COOLING OFF" PROCESS.

PAGE 02 BUENOS 02490 292017Z

4. DISAPPEARANCES: I REVIEWED MY CONVERSATION HAD WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA A DAY BEFORE, WHEREIN THE PRESIDENT STRESSED NO

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 1

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U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Garfield, Director
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny
Exemption(s):
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full
() Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to ☐
Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason ☐

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Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1979BUENOS02490

Page: 2

Channel: n/a

MORE DISAPPEARANCES. I TOLD VIOLA I HAD REPORTED THIS TO THE DEPARTMENT AND NOW OUR EMBASSY HAS INFORMATION THAT THREE PERSONS, TO-WIT: EDDIE JUAN BARRIONUEVO, JOSE SOSA AND JORGE ALBERTO STESSER HAD DISAPPEARED IN THE EL TIGRE AREA ON MARCH 24. I GAVE HIM A SLIP OF PAPER WITH THE INDIVIDUALS' NAMES AND WHATEVER LITTLE DATA WE HAD ON THEIR DISAPPEARANCES. HE STARED AT THE NAMES AND ABRUPTLY REPLIED "I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. THIS CAN'T BE TRUE. THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THIS". HE PROMISED TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER AND GIVE ME A REPORT. VIOLA STATED IN HIS OPINION THESE WERE NOT DISAPPEARANCES. I THEN MENTIONED THE NAME OF MARIO RAMIREZ, WHO SUPPOSEDLY HAD DISAPPEARED IN MARCH, BUT LATER CLARIFIED AS BEING IN EARLY FEBRUARY. I EXPLAINED TO VIOLA THAT OUR LACK OF INFORMATION ON RAMIREZ WAS BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN PLACED IN ERROR ON THE JANUARY LIST OF DISAPPEARANCES. (SEE B.A. 2444). VIOLA THEN INTERJECTED STATING IT WAS NOT A DISAPPEARANCE AS RAMIREZ WAS ENCARCERATED BASED ON CRIMINAL CHARGES BEING FILED. I AGREED SO I MOVED ON TO THE NEXT SUBJECT.

5. JACOBO TIMERMAN: WHEN I MENTIONED JACOBO TIMERMAN, VIOLA STATED PRESIDENT VIDELA HAD TOLD HIM OF MY DISCUSSION WITH HIM (VIDELA) ON TIMERMAN. VIOLA SAID THE JUNTA HAD SPENT SOME TIME DISCUSSING THE TIMERMAN CASE ATTEMPTING TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. I TOLD VIOLA THE SOLUTION WAS SIMPLE, IT WAS JUST A CASE OF PERMITTING TIMERMAN TO JOIN HIS FAMILY IN ISRAEL. VIOLA GAVE A SMILE AND SAID "IT'S SO SIMPLE AND YET SO DIFFICULT". HE MADE IT CLEAR TIMERMAN COULD NOT BE RELEASED NOW. I ASKED HIM WHEN AND HE REPLIED THE COMMISSION DEALING WITH ILLEGAL ENRICHMENT HAD NOT YET RETURNED ITS FINDING ON THE TIMERMAN CASE. I SUGGESTED THAT IF EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM HAD NOT APPEARED IN ALL THIS TIME,

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PAGE 03 BUENOS 02490 292017Z

ONE WOULD PRESUME TIMERMAN INNOCENT. VIOLA STATED HE WAS SURE THE COMMISSION WOULD CLEAR TIMERMAN OF ANY CHARGES. HE ADDED IF CONDITIONS WERE RIGHT TIMERMAN MIGHT BE ABLE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY WITHIN ONE MONTH. HE USED AN ESCAPE CLAUSE BY SAYING HE DIDN'T GUARANTEE TIMERMAN'S RELEASE, BUT IT POINTED THAT WAY.

6 CLANDESTINE CAMPS: I THEN TOLD VIOLA WE HAVE FOR MANY MONTHS BEEN RECEIVING REPORTS OF CLANDESTINE CAMPS, WHERE DISAPPEARED PERSONS WERE BEING HELD. I ALSO EXPLAINED MANY PERSONS PREFERRED TO CALL THESE CAMPS AS "CONCENTRATION CAMPS". I AGAIN TOUCHED A SENSITIVE NERVE AS VIOLA REACTED

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1979BUENOS02490

Page: 3

Channel: n/a

STRONGLY TO THIS CHARGE. I MADE IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR IT WAS NOT OUR ACCUSATION BUT THIS WAS INFORMATION FURNISHED US BY RELATIVES OF DETAINED PERSONS AND IN SOME INSTANCES FORMER DETAINEES. I ALSO MADE IT CLEAR WE COULD NOT SUBSTANTIATE THESE RUMORS, EXCEPTING ONE INSTANCE. I THEN TOLD HIM OF A DETAINEE WHO, ABOUT THREE MONTHS AGO, WANTED TO GO TO PUERTO RICO. I WAS ASKED BY AN OFFICIAL SOURCE, WITHOUT REVEALING IDENTITY, THAT THIS DETAINEE WAS BEING HELD BY THE NAVY AT THE "ESCUELA MECANCIA DE LA ARMADA". SOURCE ALSO TOLD ME THERE WERE SIXTY-FIVE OTHER "DESAPARECIDOS" IN THE NAVAL SCHOOL. I TOLD VIOLA THIS PERSON HAD TOLD ME HE WOULD SEE THESE SIXTY-FIVE "DISAPPEARED" ON A DAILY BASIS. IN VIEW OF THESE FACTS, I TOLD VIOLA I FELT THERE WAS SUBSTANCE TO THE STORY. VIOLA STATED THE EVIDENCE I HAD SEEN MERITED CREDIBILITY AS TO 65 PERSONS HAVING BEEN IN THE NAVY MECHANICAL SCHOOL. HE THEN MADE THE POINT THAT THESE 65 PERSONS MIGHT HAVE BEEN WITH THE NAVY, BUT HE COULD ASSURE ME NO ONE WAS IN THE NAVAL SCHOOL NOR ANY OTHER MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. HE THEN REPEATED THAT THESE REPORTS OF CLANDESTINE CAMPS WERE UNTRUE AND RAISED HIS RIGHT HAND, AS IF TAKING AN OATH, AND STATED HE COULD GUARANTEE NO CLANDESTINE PRISONERS NOR CAMPS EXISTED.

7. VIOLA SAID HE HAD ANOTHER APPOINTMENT, SO OUR MEETING CAME TO AN END.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PAGE 04 BUENOS 02490 292017Z

8. COMMENT: - DURING MOST OF MY MEETINGS WITH VIOLA, I HAVE SELDOM SEEN HIM LOSE HIS COMPOSURE. HE WAS ON THE DEFENSIVE THROUGHOUT THE MEETING AND NEEDLESS TO SAY WAS NOT IN THE BEST FRAME OF MIND. IT WAS OBVIOUS HE WAS TIRED BEFORE THE INTERVIEW AND ALSO IT WAS APPARENT THE NATURE OF SUBJECTS DISCUSSED WERE NOT THE TYPE TO PRODUCE JOVIALTY. I TOLD HIM I WOULD MAKE AN EFFORT TO SEE HIM ONCE AGAIN BEFORE MY DEPARTURE ON APRIL 14. HE AGREED.

CASTRO

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Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 3

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